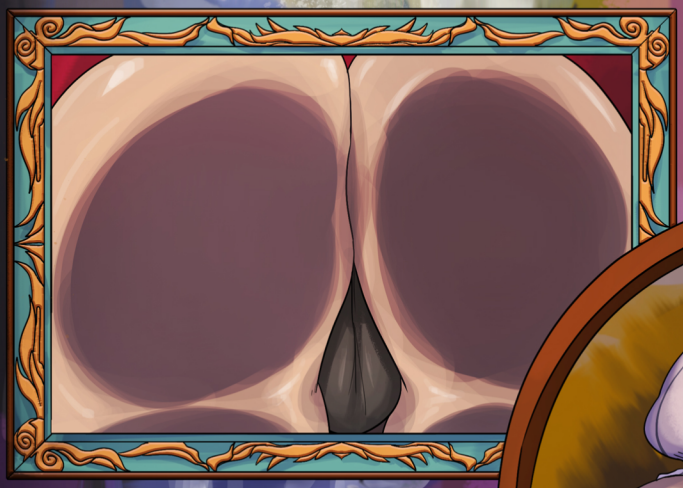
# Normal Monsters









An illustrated novella

Story by Brazzel

Art by SeekGr



# Normal Monsters

*A Vore Anthology*

by

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*Eli caught himself mid nod. The rest of the passengers, the man and two women, were exchanging horrified looks. Had they not read about predators? Normal monsters? He was unnerved by the woman's stomach, by the vision of himself surrounded by pulsing flesh, but it was a fad, a quirk of anatomy—the reports that they actually digested people were greatly exaggerated.*

*So he'd convinced himself.*

# Exit Interview

The email arrives at 9:02 a.m., which is already strange, because my termination meeting ended at 8:55.

**Subject:** Exit Interview – Mandatory

**Location:** Conference Room B

**Duration:** Approximately 20 minutes

Approximately.

I read it twice, because my brain is still in that soft, echoing state it gets into after bad news. Words slide off without sticking. “Termination”. “Redundancy”. “Best of luck in your future endeavors”. I had nodded, shaken hands, accepted the envelope like I was being handed a program at a funeral, but I was still reeling.

Now this.

Conference Room B is on the fourth floor, which I’ve never had reason to visit. The carpet there is newer, less worn. I pass by a tired-eyed coworker on their way back from the coffee machine. They don’t look at me as I swipe my card.

The room smells faintly of citrus wipes and reheated coffee. There’s a single chair on my side of the table, and one on the other. No laptop. No notepad. Just a manila folder placed dead center, aligned with the table edge.

She’s already there.

“Good morning!” she says, standing as I enter. “Please, have a seat.”

Her voice is warm in that practiced way HR people cultivate. She’s dressed professionally—navy blouse, cardigan, sensible heels—but there’s something slightly off about the proportions. Not wrong enough to comment on. Just… generous. Broad shoulders. A softness around her middle. Breasts the size of cantaloupes.

I sit.

“Before we begin,” she says, settling back into her chair, “I want to thank you for your time with us. Eight years is no small contribution.”

“Seven and a half,” I correct automatically, then regret it.

She smiles wider.

“Of course. My mistake.”

There’s a pause. She doesn’t open the folder.

“This interview,” she continues, “is an opportunity for us to ensure a smooth transition. We want to make sure everything is… processed properly.”

The word ‘processed’ lands heavier than the rest of the sentence. I tell myself that’s just my mood. Everything feels heavier today. I look toward the window, but the shades are drawn. All of the shades are drawn.

“Is this about paperwork?” I ask. “Because I already—”

“Oh, no, no,” she says quickly. “All of that’s been handled. This is more reflective.”

She leans forward slightly. The table creaks. I notice, absurdly, that her breathing is audible. Slow. Deep, like she’s just climbed a flight of stairs. There’s something underneath it.

A gurgle?

“Let’s start with something simple,” she says. “How would you describe your experience here?”

I give the answer I’ve practiced in my head since the termination meeting ended. The diplomatic one. The one that *doesn’t* burn bridges.

She nods along, murmuring agreement, her eyes never leaving my face. When I finish, she tilts her head.

“And the challenges?” she prompts.

I hesitate.

“I’m… not sure what you’re looking for.”

“Anything that made you uncomfortable,” she says gently. “Anything that felt difficult to swallow.”

I blink. Difficult to swallow? What does that even mean in this context? She just waits. The gurgling sound is omnipresent. A problem with the pipes?

"Uh," I say. "The workload could be intense. Especially near deadlines."

"Mm." She nods, making a note. "Pressure can be hard on everyone. Some people thrive under it. Others struggle."

Her breathing seems louder now. I can hear it between her sentences. In through her nose. Out through her mouth.

I force myself to relax. I'm not a child anymore. I've already been fired and my severance has already been approved. She's going to take my badge is all. Probably ask me some questions about outstanding projects. Make sure that I understand the language of my NDA.

She reaches for the folder at last and opens it.

Inside, there's only one page.

She slides it toward me.

At first glance, it looks like a standard form. My name at the top. Employee ID. Department. Then a series of checkboxes.

**Reason for Departure:**

Voluntary
Involuntary
Mutual
<u>Other</u>

She has checked "Other".

Below that:

**Please indicate any lingering concerns:**

The lines beneath are blank, but the paper is faintly warped, like it's been exposed to humidity.

"I don't really have concerns," I say. "I mean, it sucks, but—"

"Oh, not about the company," she says. "About you."

Her smile hasn't changed, but something about it feels more intense. Now there is no doubt in my mind that I am being sworn to secrecy. I sit up a little taller. I can handle this.

"You've given a lot of yourself here," she continues. "We just want to make sure nothing is left unresolved."

The room feels warmer.

"I was told this would take twenty minutes," I say, glancing at the clock on the wall.

"Approximately," she confirms.

Another pause. My entire body itches under her scrutiny, but I assure myself that I've done nothing wrong. Have they found something on my hard drive? A rogue email? The possibilities fly past, each as improbable as the last, but despite the sensitive nature of my job—of our company in general—I've never breathed a word about it to anybody. So what is she fishing for?

"Do you feel," she asks, "like you were adequately supported?"

"Yes," I say too quickly.

Her grin widens.

"Good," she says. "That makes this easier."

"Easier?" I repeat.

She closes the folder.

"Well," she says, leaning back, one hand resting idly against her stomach, "this exit interview is the last step. Once it's complete, you'll be free to go."

Something in the way she says 'free' makes my skin crawl.

"And if I don't complete it?" I ask, half joking.

Her smile widens just a fraction.

"Oh," she says. "Everyone completes it."

Her breathing deepens again, slow and steady, filling the quiet room. For the first time since I sat down, I realize the door behind me is closed.

I don't remember closing it.

She doesn't stand. Instead, she slides her chair back an inch, then another. She's larger than I anticipated. Not fat, though she is by no means skinny, just… large.

"Before we proceed," she says, "I need to verify a few things."

I let out a breath I didn't realize I was holding. Paperwork, I can do. Forms, I understand. This is the part of the world I'm good at.

"Okay," I say.

She reaches into the folder and removes something that definitely wasn't there before: a laminated badge, identical to mine except for the color. Hers is a deep, institutional red.

She sets it on the table between us. A mechanism beeps. Clearance has just been given for something, but I don't know what. I wipe my palms on my pants.

"Can you confirm your full name for me?"

I do.

"And your date of hire?"

I answer.

"Final date of employment?"

"Today."

She nods, satisfied, and slides the badge back into the folder. I puzzle at its presence. Something is happening. Some bureaucratic nonsense that I'm too low on the totem pole to be privy to. Anger washes through me. They're yanking my chain.

"Thank you," she says. "That aligns with our records."

She presses a button beneath the table.

There's a soft click.

The lights dim, shifting from harsh white to something warmer. The HR representative loosens the collar of her blouse. The buttons in front of her chest heave as she breathes in deep.

"What was that?" I ask.

"Privacy mode," she says. "So we won't be interrupted."

"I didn't realize Conference Room B had that."

"Oh, it was installed recently."

Of course it was.

She folds her hands again, but this time they rest lower, just below the edge of the table. Her shoulders rise and fall with each breath.

“Now,” she says, “this portion of the interview is less conversational.”

My mouth feels dry.

“You said it was reflective.”

“It is,” she agrees. “Just… internally.”

She stands.

Up close, the proportions are harder to ignore. The room feels smaller with her on her feet. She moves around the table—not toward the door, but toward me.

I push my chair back instinctively. It rolls an inch, then stops.

The legs have locked.

“I… what?”

“It’s standard,” she says, noticing. “For safety.”

“Whose?”

She smiles, but there’s effort in it now. A tension around her mouth. Is she about to punch me in the face? Threaten me? I grip the arms of the chair as she leans in closer.

“Do you remember,” she asks, her breath hot on my nose, “the clause in your employment contract regarding post-termination obligations?”

“No,” I say. My anger is fading, replaced by unease. I glance at the blacked out windows. “I don’t remember half the clauses.”

“That’s normal,” she says. “They’re very dense.”

She places one hand on the back of my chair.

The other rests against her stomach.

Up close, I can hear it—not just her breathing, but the something beneath it. A slow, internal motion. A slosh. That omnipresent gurgle.

“You were an excellent employee,” she says quietly. “Consistent. Reliable. You took on more than was asked of you.”

Her fingers tighten slightly on the chair.

“But sometimes,” she continues, “the organization has to make difficult decisions about resource allocation.”

“What does that mean?” I ask, trembling.

“It means,” she says gently, “that not everything can be carried forward.”

Sweat trickles down my spine. I grasp at my collar, suddenly aware of how tight it feels. My voice comes out thin.

“Is this a joke?” I ask. “I’ve already been fired. I know that I can’t talk about this job. If you’ll just show me the exit—”

She leans down.

Her face is level with mine, close enough that I can smell coffee on her breath, sharp and bitter.

“This is the exit,” she says.

Her mouth opens.

Not wide. Not yet. Just enough for me to get the picture.

I try to stand.

The chair doesn’t move.

I try to push past her.

Her hand tightens, pinning me in place.

“Please,” she says, still polite. “Don’t struggle. It makes the transition unpleasant.”

The sound inside her grows louder; a slow and patient churn, like an engine.

“This won’t take long,” she adds, glancing at the clock. “Approximately 20 minutes.”

She opens her mouth wider.

And when she leans in, when her shadow falls fully over me, when the warmth becomes heat, I understand.

The exit interview isn’t about feedback.

It’s about downsizing.

And I am no longer employed.



Her lips close around my face. There's a moment—an awful, suspended moment—where my nose and mouth are pressed into that supple flesh, and my brain insists this can still be negotiated. That, any second now, she'll pull back and laugh and explain the policy rationale behind whatever this is supposed to represent. A team-building exercise. A failed attempt at flirting.

Then her tongue presses forward.

It's broad, muscular, and unmistakably purposeful; pushing past my cheek, flattening my protest before it forms. Saliva coats my skin in thick, slippery warmth. I gag reflexively and that, apparently, is the cue.

Her throat opens.

I slide forward. My shoulders catch, wedged against the stretch of her mouth. My arms are pinned uselessly at my sides by the pressure of her lips and jaw. The sensation is overwhelming: a tight, compressing heat that leaves no room for leverage.

She hums.

The vibration travels through her, through me, rattling my teeth and making my stomach lurch. It's contented. Almost appreciative.

"There we go," she murmurs around me. "Just like that."

Her hand leaves the chair and presses against my back, firm and guiding, urging me deeper. I feel her swallow around my shoulders, a powerful contraction that drags me forward inch by inch. Her throat closes around my chest, squeezing the breath from me in short, panicked bursts. I wheeze, heart hammering a scant inch from her own.

I try to push back.

There is nowhere to push.

Her muscles work methodically, efficiently, each swallow followed by a brief pause—just long enough for me to think she might stop—then another pull downward. The buttons on her blouse pop and her breasts bounce against my legs. *She's huge,* I think deliriously. *Easily E-cups.*



My feet leave the floor.

That’s the moment it becomes real.

Not when her mouth closed. Not when her teeth framed my vision. It’s when my shoes scrape uselessly against empty air and find nothing because there is nothing and I am about to be devoured.

Her lips seal with a soft, final sound.

For a few seconds, there is only darkness and the thunder of my own pulse. Then gravity adjusts again and I am forced downward, her throat tightening around me, urging me toward somewhere deeper.

Her breathing surrounds me now. Each inhale expands the walls around my head. Each exhale squeezes them in again.

Then I drop.

Not far. The air is knocked from my lungs as I land in something gross and yielding. I sprawl awkwardly, half-curled, my knees drawn up by instinct.

The space around me is… larger than I expected.

Not cavernous, but not crushing, either. The walls pulse slowly, flexing with her breath, soft and weird and undeniably alive. Acid pools beneath me. It soaks into my clothes, sticky and potent enough to sting where it touches exposed skin.

I cough, retching, trying desperately to draw a full breath.

The air is thick but breathable. For now.

Above me, her voice echoes.

"Thank you for your cooperation," she says. "We strive to make these experiences as smooth as possible."

The walls tighten briefly, like a reassuring squeeze.

"You may experience some discomfort," she continues. "That's normal during the adjustment period."

Adjustment period.

I curl in on myself, shaking, trying to protect my face, my hands, anything vital. The heat is oppressive now, the smell stronger, tinged with something sharp that burns the back of my throat.

"What—" I manage, my voice echoing strangely. "What happens now?"

There's a pause.

I can almost picture her tilting her head, considering.

"Now," she says, "we finalize your departure."

The walls flex again, stronger this time; a slow, deliberate compression that presses in on my back and legs, forcing me tighter into myself.

"You'll find," she adds, "that resisting the process only prolongs it."

Something shifts beneath me.

A deeper churn. A heavier movement.

I feel it then—an unmistakable warmth spreading where I lie, tingling, biting. My skin crawls, nerves lighting up in panicked warning as the environment around me subtly changes.

"Oh," she says softly, almost to herself. "Yes. There it is."

I scream.

The sound is swallowed instantly, lost in the wet, living dark.

And somewhere above, her hand presses against her stomach, feeling the movement, the struggle, the last of what I have to give.

“Exit interview: complete!”



# Last Seat on the Train

You almost don't get on.

The platform is crowded in that exhausted, end-of-day way—people standing too close, eyes fixed anywhere but each other. When the train finally screeches into the station, you consider waiting for the next one. You're tired. Your feet hurt. But then the doors slide open with that familiar pneumatic sigh, and momentum carries you forward.

Inside, it's worse. Every seat is taken. Bodies packed shoulder to shoulder down the aisle, the air thick with damp coats and old perfume and the faint sewage tang of the subway. You grab a pole and resign yourself to standing the rest of the way home.

Then the train lurches.

Someone stumbles into you, muttering an apology. Another rider pushes past, disembarking at the last second. And suddenly, impossibly, there's an empty seat.

It's the only one.

You hesitate, just long enough for the man behind you to clear his throat pointedly. You can feel the weight of expectation—*take it or move*—so you do.

The woman beside the seat shifts to make room.

"Go ahead," she says, smiling.

Her voice is low and pleasant, almost musical. You thank her and sit, knees angled carefully inward, acutely aware of how close she is. Her thigh presses lightly against yours with the sway of the train.

She's big, you note. Pleasantly so. Wide hips, a soft curve to her stomach that strains faintly against the fabric of her sweater. It's dark blue, the material thick and slightly frayed under the fluorescent lights. She smells faintly of soap.

The train pulls out of the station.

For a while, nothing happens.



You scroll your phone. She sits with her hands folded in her lap, posture perfect, gaze unfocused as she watches the window reflect the interior of the car back at her. The tunnel rushes past, lights strobing.

Then you notice that her stomach has somewhat popped out of her sweater.

It's large, but there's nothing wrong with that. When the car moves back and forth, it jiggles slightly, sloshing against the fabric of her sweater, but there's nothing wrong with that. In fact, it's hard to say *what* you noticed about her stomach. A sound? An errant bulge? A deep gurgle of *absolute longing?*

The train sways again, and her shoulder brushes yours.

"Sorry," she says automatically, though she doesn't move away.

"No worries," you reply, wondering at the contact. Is she overly friendly? Flirting? When you scoot sideways, her shoulder moves with you. The contact makes your heart flutter pathetically.

Her smile returns. Does she know what you're thinking?

"Long day?"

"Yeah," you say. "You?"

She hums, noncommittal. "Something like that."

The lights flicker briefly as the train enters a darker stretch of tunnel. When they stabilize, you realize her eyes are on you. They're piercing and intelligent and despite yourself, your heart twinges. She's large enough to eat you, but—

"You got on just in time," she says. "That was the last seat."

"I know," you say, glancing around. The aisle is packed now. No room to stand, let alone move. "Lucky me."

She chuckles. The sound vibrates through her chest, through the small point of contact where your arms brush. You try to suppress the redness in your cheeks to no avail.

"Yes," she agrees. "Lucky."

Another stop comes and goes. No one gets off near you. No one gets on. Somehow, however, the claustrophobia only seems to isolate

you. The woman's stomach heaves as she shifts her legs. Her breathing grows more pronounced.

Your knee bumps hers.

She doesn't pull away.

Instead, her leg presses back, firm and fleshy.

"You okay?" she asks, tilting her head as you mask you blush with a cough. Her thigh jiggles against yours. It's unmistakably erotic.

"Yeah," you say. "Just cramped."

She nods, understanding.

"It can get uncomfortable," she says. "Especially when you're stuck."

Stuck.

Her hand moves then, casually, resting against her stomach. The motion draws your eye before you can stop it. Her fingers splay slightly, pressing into the meat, as if feeling for something beneath.

The train rattles over a junction. The lights flicker again, longer this time. When they come back, the car seems… quieter. The hum of conversation has faded. People are still there, but everyone is looking at their phones or out the windows, pointedly disengaged.

Her hand hasn't moved.

"I don't think this is my stop," you say suddenly, though you don't know why. The words tumble out, unprompted.

She looks at the map above the door, then back at you.

"No," she says. "Not yet."

Something shifts under her hand.

Just a small, internal movement that makes the fabric ripple.

Your heart stutters.

"Did you feel that?" you ask before you can stop yourself.

She smiles.

"Oh," she says. "Yes."

The train begins to slow. The announcement chime crackles overhead, but the words are garbled, lost in static.

People stand, preparing to disembark.

Not you.

You try to rise with them, but her hand slides from her stomach to your thigh, heavy and intentional. Her fingers curl, resting with enough weight to make a point.

“Careful,” she murmurs. “You’ll knock someone over.”

“I—I think this is my station,” you say again, louder.

She glances toward the doors.

They remain closed.

“No,” she says. “It isn’t.”

The train lurches forward again, never having fully stopped.

The people standing sway, then settle. A few glance around, confused, then return to their screens.

Her hand tightens slightly on your leg.

“You should really stay seated,” she says. “It’s safer.”

Her stomach presses against your arm now. Her very full, very squishy stomach. You feel another shift beneath the fabric, larger this time. It’s followed by a slow, satisfied breath.

Your mouth goes dry.

“This seat—” you start.

She leans closer.

Her breath washes over your ear.

“It was empty for a reason,” she whispers.

The doors open.

That’s what makes you move.

The train finally slows enough that the platform lights smear past the windows instead of streaking, and the familiar chime sounds again—clearer this time. The doors slide apart with a hiss, and cool air rushes in.

You try to stand.

Her hand tightens, her fingers digging into the muscle of your thigh through your clothes.

“Wait,” she says.

“I need to get off,” you reply, already half-rising. Your shoulder bumps the pole in front of you. Someone behind you sighs.

“Sorry,” you say automatically, to no one in particular.

The aisle is chaos now—people shuffling, backpacks swinging, coats brushing faces. Someone steps on your foot. Another presses past, blocking your path to the door entirely.

You turn back toward her, breath quickening.

“Excuse me,” you say. “Your—your hand—”

She doesn’t remove it.

Instead, she stands.

The space she occupies unfolds upward, outward, her body rising between you and the door with an ease that makes your stomach drop. Up close, the curve of her belly is unmistakable now, heavy and forward, straining toward the ground.

The people around you barely glance at her. A man squeezes past, muttering. A woman checks her phone and steps around the two of you like you’re a pillar.

The doors begin to chime again.

“Please,” you beg. “I really have to—”

She places her other hand on your shoulder.

The contact is intimate in a way that has nothing to do with affection. It’s possessive. Her palm is warm, her fingers spread wide, steadying you as the train rocks.

“Sit,” she says softly.

The doors start to close.

A spike of panic cuts through you.

“No,” you say, louder. “Hold the door—”

You twist, trying to force your way past her, but the crowd has already shifted. The gap you need is gone, bodies closing ranks with the unthinking efficiency of commuters who have places to be.

The doors seal with a final hiss.

The train jerks forward.

Someone laughs nervously. Someone else swears under their breath. The moment passes.

Her hand slides from your shoulder to your back, firm and guiding. She nudges you with her stomach. You stumble backward. Your vision is filled with the woman. The smiling, staring woman, so large that she blocks the light.

“You missed it,” she says, almost sympathetically.

“I didn’t,” you insist. “I was right there.”

She hums, a low sound in her throat. “Trains can be tricky like that.”

Your knees hit the edge of the seat.

Before you can stop yourself, you sit.

The motion brings you closer than before, your face pressed against her stomach. The heat radiating from her is intense now, no longer ignorable. You are smothered in the fabric of her sweater, nose sinking deep into her immense gut.

Surely, someone will notice. Surely.

But when she pulls away, every passenger seems to be looking in a different direction. You stare up at the woman, dizzy.

“Why?” you ask.

“This is not your stop,” she says.

Then she turns.

Her ass blots out the rest of the train car. The woman reaches down and tugs on her waistband, lowering it slowly, casually, as the sweet smell of sweat and perfume fills your nostrils. She is wearing red panties. These, she slides down, hooking her thumb in the waistband and yanking them over her ample thighs.

“Sit still,” the woman says. “You wouldn’t want to cause a stir.”

You can’t move. You sit frozen as the woman pulls her cheeks apart, hovering over your head. Her pucker twitches. She’s going to sit on you. Her pucker twitches again. Is she expecting you to lick it?



A hand appears behind your head. The woman holds you steady as she sits, grunting, and suddenly, the clamour of the train vanishes in a single, erotic squelch.

"Mmrrph!"

Your head is in her ass! Your head is literally being shoved up this random woman's asshole!

You reach up and grab both cheeks, gasping, straining, but you can feel her weight sliding down your neck, your shoulders, heaving itself over and around your arms. When it hits your elbows, your arms are knocked to your sides. One moment, there is compression—heat, constriction, the sense of being held—and the next, the world rearranges itself around a new set of rules.

You are folded. Drawn into a narrower space that curves and dips, that grips in sections rather than all at once. The walls here contract sequentially, like hands passing you along.

The train lurches.

You are rocked sideways as the car sways, but inside her you're moved forward, downward, around a bend. The conflicting directions make your stomach flip uselessly. Up and down no longer mean anything in the gooey embrace of this woman's bowels.

A contraction ripples through her. The woman shudders politely as she pulls your legs into her ass.

You feel it as a squeeze from behind, then the sensation of being advanced. Your shoulder scrapes along the wall. Your knee bumps something firm—another loop, another curve.

She shifts her weight.

You feel *that* immediately.

The train rounds a corner, metal shrieking on metal, and inside her the effect is magnified. Her intestines shift with her balance, swinging you gently, nauseatingly, as you're suspended.

You press your palms out instinctively.

The walls don't yield. They push back, muscles responding reflexively, tightening around the intrusion.

Around you.

A deeper movement follows—slower, heavier.

The environment warms by degrees.

“Sorry,” the woman giggles.

You gasp as another contraction rolls through, stronger this time, and you’re drawn forward again, deeper into a section that narrows briefly before widening.

The train jolts over a switch.

Inside her, you’re swung hard enough that your shoulder thumps against the wall. The impact knocks the breath from you in a sharp, humiliating burst.

You curl tighter.

It’s hard to keep track of time here. The train’s rhythm bleeds into hers, acceleration and deceleration mirrored by internal motion. When the train speeds up; her body seems to work, pushing you along more insistently. When it slows; there’s a brief lull, a stillness before the next wave.

The pressure begins to build.

Your head breaks into another chamber. It’s humid and wet and it smells like hell, but it’s spacious. The woman guides you, cooing as your shoulders pop free. Then your chest and your hips. Only when your feet are squeezed into the chamber and the walls close around you once more do you realize where you are.

The woman’s hands knead you from the outside. Her stomach sways with the motion of the train as somewhere overhead, a chime sounds. She stands, sloshing you. You pound against the walls, but the sound is lost in the crowd. The woman leans over you, kissing your head.

“This is your stop,” she whispers.

Your scream is drowned by the roar of the train.



# Swallowing Lessons

The first thing she teaches him is how to breathe.

"Slow," Bonnie says. "Through your nose. Like you're fogging up a mirror, but in one consistent stream."

Cosmo sits on the edge of her bed, hands folded in his lap, trying very hard not to look at her mouth. His foot bounces. His cock is erect against his boxers, twitching ever so slightly.

"I know how to breathe," he says.

She smiles, but doesn't argue.

"Sure you do. You just don't know how to breathe for this."

The room is warm, curtains half-drawn against the late afternoon sun. Her apartment is quiet. No roommates. No interruptions. They are both in their underwear: Bonnie in blue lingerie and Cosmo in black boxers.

"Okay," she says, settling cross-legged on the bed across from him. She keeps her hands visible, palms up, the way she was taught. "We're not doing anything irreversible today. My mentor told me to keep this quick. No digestion."

Cosmo nods, biting his lip.

"Temporary," she adds. "In and out. You stay aware the whole time. I don't swallow until you tell me to."

He swallows.

The irony isn't lost on either of them.

"Have you… " he starts, then stops. "Have you done this before?"

She considers lying. Decides against it. *This one is going to last,* she thinks as she rubs the remains of her ex.

"I've swallowed people," she says. "I've just never… practiced like this. I like you. I don't want to make any mistakes."

That gets a weak laugh out of him, which she counts as a win.

He shifts, glancing at her throat now. She can almost see the questions lining up behind his eyes—the stretch, the pressure, the impossible mechanics of it. He's curious. That's the problem.

Curiosity is fragile. If he panics inside of her like the last one… she won't be able to stop herself. The compulsion to digest panicking prey is ingrained in every predator. That's why they have to do this exercise. That's why they both need to keep calm.

"If at any point you want to stop," she says, shaking her head to clear it, "you tap twice. Anywhere you can reach. I'll feel it."

"And you promise?" he asks.

She nods.

"I promise."

She waits until his breathing slows to something steadier before continuing.

"Lesson one," she says, getting up on her knees. His eyes are so trusting that she has to physically restrain herself from kissing him. "Being swallowed isn't passive. You help."

"How?" Cosmo asks.

"By not fighting the motion," she says, swaying her shoulders. "By staying loose, which takes effort. Think of it like going under water. Panic makes it worse, so you have to focus on keeping yourself totally relaxed."

He makes a face.

"That's not reassuring."

"Neither is choking," she says mildly.

That earns her a real laugh.

"Okay," he says. "Okay. What next?"

She moves closer.

Not fast. Never fast. Fast would activate her instincts and instincts would activate her acids. Currently, her belly is flat and (mostly) empty. If she can keep it that way, then she can hold him inside of herself for more than just a second.

She kneels in front of him, close enough now that she can feel the heat of his legs through the fabric of her panties. His scent is sharp with nerves. She glances at the bulge in his boxers. That was a good sign. Time for some stimulation.

"Lesson two," she says softly, "is eye contact."

He stiffens.

"Really?"

"Yes," she says. "If you can see me, you remember I'm here. That this is something I'm doing with you."

She takes his cock in her hand. He glances away as her fingers drag across the fabric, massaging his shaft. When she stops, he looks back at her. She starts to stroke again.

"Good boy," she says under her breath. "Just keep looking at me."

He fidgets, and so does she. It's unnatural to maintain eye contact for over ten seconds. Tingles spread across Bonnie's chest, her stomach, her privates. She blushes as she feels the wetness of pre soak through the boxers to coat her palm.

"Good," she murmurs. "Now—don't lean in yet."

She opens her mouth just enough that he can see the darkness inside, the soft pink curve of her tongue, the way her jaw shifts as she prepares herself. She keeps it deliberately unthreatening: no stretching, no theatrics.

She's hyper-aware of her body now.

The weight in her stomach; the faint ache that signals readiness. She swallows reflexively; once, twice, and feels the familiar flex of muscles lining up to do what they know how to do.

He notices.

"You did that on purpose," he says. He's still cupped in her hand, bucking against her. *Not right now, ponyboy,* she thinks, easing off.

"Yes," she admits. "So you'd see it happen first."

He nods.

“Okay,” he says. “Okay. I think I’m ready to try.”

“Head only,” she says immediately. “That’s all we’re doing today.”

He hesitates, then leans forward like he’s going to kiss her. She gulps. Her body feels electric. If she can’t stop...

Bonnie’s lips brush his forehead. She keeps her jaw relaxed, letting her tongue rest gently against his hairline. His skin is hot against her mouth. Gods, she wants to push herself forward, to sleeve him inside of her, but she has to go slow, go steady.

He shudders.

“I’m okay,” he says quickly.

“I know,” she says, the words muffled around him.

She opens wider.

Her mouth stretches around his face, cheeks bulging slightly as she accommodates him. The sensation is familiar to her, but the emotional weight is different. He’s trembling. She can feel it through her lips, through the way his breath stutters against her tongue. She yearns to taste more of him—the smell is simply phenomenal—but she can’t.

She doesn’t swallow.

Not yet.

“Breathe,” she reminds him. “Just like we practiced.”

He does.

Slow. Through his nose. In and out, smooth as can be.

Her jaw aches faintly as she holds him there, suspended in that liminal space between outside and in. Her throat tightens reflexively.

“Do you feel that?” she asks.

“Yes,” he says. “Yeah. It’s… warm.”

“Good.”

Her muscles flex once: a gentle, partial swallow that draws his face a fraction deeper. Enough that his cheeks press against her lips. Enough that the world narrows for him without disappearing entirely.

He gasps.



She freezes.

“Tap if you need to,” she says.

He doesn’t.

Instead, he nods.

“Again,” he says.

Bonnie blushes, but she doesn’t rush it.

That’s the rule she repeats to herself as she shifts her weight, pulling him closer, letting his balance settle against her. Her body is still keyed up from the aborted swallow, muscles humming with readiness, but she forces herself to slow her breathing until the instinctive rhythm fades into something she can steer.

“You still with me?” she asks quietly.

“Yes,” he says. His voice is calmer now. “I’m… I’m not panicking.”

“That’s good,” she says. “That’s really good.”

She waits another full breath. She’s ravenous. Already she knows that she won’t stop at the head, but he’s leaning against her, his full faith on display as his face is framed by her gullet. She pushes him back with her tongue. Enough to speak.

“This time,” she says, “I won’t stop halfway. If you tap, I’ll reverse it, but otherwise I need to follow through. Stopping in the middle is harder on both of us.”

He swallows audibly.

“Okay,” he says. “I trust you.”

The words land heavier than anything else tonight.

Bonnie opens her mouth again, wider than before, jaw stretching as she leans in. She feels the familiar pull in her throat, the deep reflex that wants to finish, and braces herself against it, keeping her hands steady on his back. Cosmo strains his toes against the floor. He’s pushing himself inside of her. The tension between their bodies reaches a crescendo as her lips close around his head once more.

She swallows.

The motion is decisive.

Her throat contracts in a smooth, powerful wave that draws him in past the point of hesitation. His shoulders slide through with a stretch that makes her jaw ache sharply, and then there's no stopping it—her body takes over, swallowing again, deeper this time, pulling his chest in, then his waist.

His legs lift off the floor.

*It was only supposed to be the head,* Bonnie thinks briefly as she closes her eyes and cups her throat with her hands. *Goodness, this feeling…*

She braces instinctively, letting herself sit as the last of him slides down. His feet vanish past her lips, her mouth sealing with a soft, final sound.

She exhales.

For a moment, all she can feel is fullness.

Hunger. Pleasure. The undeniable presence of another person contained safely inside her, her body adjusting around the unfamiliar shape. Her stomach stretches around him. He tests the limits of the space with tentative fingers. Bonnie's eyes roll.

She presses a hand against her middle.

He's there, curled up inside of her. She feels him wriggle, fighting for space.

"Can you breathe?" she asks

There's a pause.

"Yes," he says. "It's… weirdly okay."

Relief loosens something in her chest.

She shifts slightly, testing her balance, making sure she can move without jostling him too much. Inside, he slides just a fraction, the internal space responding to gravity and motion. She stills immediately, waiting for his reaction.

"I felt that," he says.

"Sorry," she says. "I'll stay still."

"It's fine," he says. "Just… tell me before you move."

"I will," she promises.



They stay like that for a minute—two people sharing a space that was never meant to be shared this way. Her breathing slows, the tension in her throat easing now that the hard part is over. The urge to swallow again flickers briefly, instinctual and unwelcome. So does the urge to squeeze.

She ignores it.

"This is the holding phase," she explains quietly. "My body will try to move you along if I let it. I won't."

"Thank you," he says.

She smiles faintly.

After another minute, she taps twice against her own stomach.

"That's our signal," she says. "I'm going to bring you back up."

She gives him time to prepare, then pushes her posture forward, engaging a different set of muscles. The reversal is slower and much less instinctive—her stomach tightening, guiding him upward in stages rather than pulling.

He feels heavier this way. Less cooperative. Her body resists the unnatural motion, but she persists, swallowing reflexes carefully suppressed as she works him back toward her throat.

"Okay," she murmurs. "You're coming up now."

She feels him move, inch by inch, the pressure changing as he's guided upward. When his shoulders reach her throat again, she pauses, letting the muscles relax before continuing.

"Almost there," she says.

With one last careful effort, she pushes his head back into her mouth, lips stretching as he emerges, gasping softly as cool air hits his face.

She pulls back immediately, giving him space, supporting him as he regains his balance.

They sit there for a moment, both breathing hard now, adrenaline finally catching up. He's wet, but not dripping. He smells like mint toothpaste and, well, the contents of her stomach.

He looks… astonished.

“That,” he says hoarsely, “was nothing like I imagined.”

She laughs quietly, rubbing her throat.

“Yeah. It never is.”

They don’t speak for a while after that. There’s nothing left to explain. Bonnie tries not to pressure him, but her leg bounces, waiting for his reaction. If they’re going to date, if they’re going to push past this first stage, then he’s going to have to get used to this. More than that, he’s going to have to *like it.*

When Cosmo finally stands, Bonnie feels the last of the tension drain from her. He was covered in her stomach juices, trembling like a baby deer. But he was smiling. Smiling and fully erect.

“Same time next week?” he asks, half joking.

She considers it.

“My, um, throat is already warmed up if you want to… you know?”

Her eyes flick to his boxers.

“Will that be okay?” he asks. “I’m not too… big?”

Bonnie laughs, ties her hair back.

“Yeah, yeah,” she says, getting to her knees. “Get over here, big boy.”



# Capacity

The elevator had been too full from the start.

Five people stood inside, shoulders turned, elbows tucked, eyes fixed dead ahead. The mirrored wall reflected them back in fragments: a sleeve, a cheekbone, a tired eye.

The doors slid shut with a soft chime.

The woman in the back corner didn't move.

She was taller than the rest, broad through her shoulders and hips, wearing a loose blazer despite the building's overheated lobby. One hand braced against the wall, palm flat. The other rested low on her abdomen, fingers spread wide. The curve under her shirt was pronounced—too large to be a pregnancy bump.

Eli told himself not to stare.

He told himself it was rude. He told himself it was none of his business. He told himself his brain was just being dramatic because he'd been stuck at work late again and his thoughts were sharp-edged from fatigue.

He looked away and focused on the floor indicator.

"Fifteenth," the man by the buttons said, voice bright with strained friendliness. "Everyone going down?"

A woman near Eli—short, neat hair, phone clutched in one hand—gave a half-nod.

"Lobby. Then the train."

"Same," Eli said. "Lobby."

The man by the buttons smiled at them like they'd just joined a club.

"Good. We can all get out and pretend we didn't spend the day answering emails."

The woman—the one with the phone—snorted.

"Bold of you to assume the emails stop."

The predator in the corner didn't laugh. She inhaled slowly through her nose and exhaled through her mouth, controlled and quiet, like she was counting.

*Predator.* Right. Eli knew that they existed, that there had been some press about them recently, but he hadn't expected to meet one in the wild so soon… or so full. Had someone in the office ordered her service? That had been what the report had said. That some predators offered *services* to paying clientele.

It wasn't his business, Eli reminded himself.

The elevator began to descend.

He was already planning what he'd eat when he got home—something quick, something comforting. He'd stop at the corner store if it was still open. He'd—

The elevator lurched.

A brief shudder made everyone sway in unison.

"Whoa," the man by the buttons said, laughing too loudly. "Old building."

"Don't jinx it," Phone Woman muttered.

The predator's hand tightened on the wall. Her other hand pressed more firmly into her stomach. She exhaled again, longer this time.

Eli didn't look, then did. He couldn't help it.

The curve beneath her shirt shifted, subtle but undeniable, as if something inside had resettled. The movement was slow, heavy, and it made Eli's scalp prickle.

He looked away quickly.

The elevator continued down.

Thirteenth. Twelfth.

The lights flickered once. The hum deepened. Eli felt the vibration change under his shoes, like the car was working harder.

"Does this elevator always do that?" Phone Woman asked, looking up at the ceiling lights. "I'm usually across the street."

The man by the buttons shrugged.



“Sometimes. It’s dramatic.”

“Mm,” the predator said softly.

Everyone turned toward her, because the sound was too quiet to ignore.

She didn’t look at any of them. Her eyes were half-lidded, unfocused, and her breathing had a rhythm to it—slow in, slow out. Her stomach continued to shift. No, not shift. *Slosh.*

***Ggrrrglllrrrt…***

“Sorry,” she said.

The word landed weirdly, not quite fitting.

“What?” the man by the buttons asked, his smile fading. “Sorry for what?”

The predator swallowed. She kept one hand on her stomach.

“Nothing,” she said, then corrected herself. “Not nothing. Just… if this takes a while.”

Phone Woman frowned.

“Why would it—”

The elevator jolted again.

This time it didn’t recover.

It slowed abruptly, the downward motion turning sluggish, uneven. The hum became a strained groan. Eli felt his stomach lift, weightless.

Then the elevator stopped between floors.

The lights flickered twice, dimmed, and steadied at half brightness.

Silence rushed in.

Someone let out a small, involuntary laugh. The sound died immediately in the dead air. For a crucial second, they all waited, waited for the lurch, the descent, but that was irrational. The elevator was stuck, not freefalling. Still, it was hard to imagine oneself suspended in midair.

The man by the buttons pressed the lobby button again. Nothing happened. He pressed all of the buttons. Still nothing.

“Okay,” he said, voice flattening. “Okay. That’s… fine.”

Phone Woman stared at the darkened floor indicator. “It’s not fine.”

“It’s fine,” he repeated, like a spell. “It’s an inconvenience.”

Eli felt the walls close in by an inch. He took a slow breath and tasted the air. It was warmer than it should’ve been, and there was a faint sourness beneath the perfume and deodorant.

The predator in the corner exhaled slowly.

The man by the buttons hit the emergency call.

The speaker crackled, then a voice came on, tinny and distant.

“Elevator car B17. We see you’ve stopped between floors.”

“Yes,” the man said. “We’re stuck.”

“Copy. Maintenance has been notified. Please remain calm and stay inside the car.”

“How long?” Phone Woman asked sharply, leaning toward the panel like proximity would make the answer better.

There was a pause. Keyboard clicks. “Approximately twenty minutes.”

“Twenty?” Phone Woman repeated. “Are you kidding? My kids are waiting for me at home.”

“Ma’am,” the voice said, “the technicians are en route. Please remain calm.”

The call cut.

The silence returned, thicker now.

Phone Woman muttered something under her breath and shoved her phone into her pocket. She crossed her arms, pressing into the wall.

The last woman—Eli realized she hadn’t spoken yet—clapped her hands and said, “Okay. It’s okay. We’ve all been stuck in elevators. They get you out.”

Her voice was gentle, soothing. Eli realized with a start that they worked on the same floor. This woman answered the phones. Gods, he should know her name…

The man by the buttons nodded too fast. “Exactly. Yeah. We’re fine. We just… wait.”

Eli tried to make his body believe it.

He leaned his shoulder into the cool metal wall and listened. The predator’s breathing was the loudest sound in the elevator. Eli’s eyes drifted to her again.

Her posture had changed. She was still upright, still braced with one hand on the wall, but her shoulders were tense. Her other hand pressed low against her stomach like she was holding something in place.

Phone Woman noticed Eli looking and snapped, “Do you have to stare?”

Eli flushed. “I—no. Sorry.”

Phone Woman followed his gaze and froze for a fraction of a second.

Because the predator’s stomach moved again, more noticeably this time. The curve pushed outward, then settled. A slow ripple beneath the fabric, like something shifting in a heavy sack.

**GlooorRRrP!**

“Okay,” Phone Woman said, voice brittle. “What is that?”

The predator’s eyes flicked up.

For a moment, she looked like she might lie.

“There’s someone in here,” she said quietly.

The other woman—the woman I worked with—blinked. “In… the elevator?”

The predator shook her head once.

“In me.”

The man by the buttons let out a laugh. “Okay. Sure.”

“I’m not joking,” the predator said. She sounded tired, not dramatic. “I’m not trying to scare you.”

Phone Woman took a step back that she didn’t have room for. She pressed into the wall and stared. “What does that mean? In you how?”

The predator's jaw tightened.

"I ate him."

Eli caught himself mid nod. The rest of the passengers, the man and two women, were exchanging horrified looks. Had they not read about predators? Normal monsters? He was unnerved by the woman's stomach, by the vision of himself surrounded by pulsing flesh, but it was a fad, a quirk of anatomy—the reports that they actually digested people were greatly exaggerated.

So he'd convinced himself.

***GGrrrGGLloOOORRP!***

The predator continued, quickly, like she knew if she didn't say it all at once she'd never get the words out.

"He consented. It was planned. I'm… like that. It's what I am. I was supposed to go home after and finish in private."

The man by the buttons stared at her mouth, then her stomach, then her mouth again. "This is… some kind of prank, right?"

"No," she said.

The other woman—the gentle-voiced one—looked like she might faint. She pressed her palm against the wall.

"Oh my God."

Eli's throat went dry. The predator was biting her lips, grinding her hips against the back wall. Her stomach drooped between her legs, swaying hypnotically. Was it just him, or was it looking less solid by the minute? He wiped the sweat from his brow. He was imagining it.

Phone Woman's voice rose.

"You can't just— You can't just EAT someone!"

The predator flinched.

"I can," she said. "It's a thing. Something to do with genetics and elasticity. Some, um, people are, ah, curious about what it would be like to be swallowed whole. So I oblige."

Eli found his voice somewhere. "Is he… alive?"

The predator hesitated.

Then, carefully: "Not for long."

The gentle-voiced woman made a small sound, half sob, half gasp. The prickle went up Eli's spine. He clutched the railing, trying to control his breathing.

"The reports said that predators don't digest their prey," he heard himself say. "That they're just humans that are more flexible than others."

The predator pursed her lips.

"The reports are wrong," she said. "We digest. Sometimes."

The man by the buttons backed into the panel. "Okay. Okay. We're going to call again. We're going to tell them—"

"No," the predator said, sharp enough that everyone froze.

Then she softened immediately. "I'm sorry. It's just—please don't."

Phone Woman stared. "Why not?"

The predator's hand dug into her stomach, fingers splayed, pressing as if she could hold the contents still. "Because if you panic, the situation gets worse."

"What situation?" the man demanded.

The predator took a slow breath. In. Out.

"My body doesn't like being interrupted."

Eli didn't understand. Then he did, and he wished he didn't.

She continued, voice shaking now. "When I'm full, when I'm… digesting, and there's no way to finish safely, my instincts—my physiology—assume I'm still feeding."

Phone Woman's eyes went wide with sudden comprehension. "No. No, you don't mean—"

A wet, internal sound rolled through the predator's abdomen, loud enough that the elevator itself seemed to hear it. The curve beneath her coat shifted again, heavier, lower.

The smell grew warmer, thicker.

The predator shut her eyes and leaned her head back against the wall. "Please," she said, almost pleading. "Just stay still. Let the time pass."

The man by the buttons laughed again, but this time it was pure panic.

"Stay still? You're telling us to stay still while you digest a person?"

"I'm telling you to stay still," she said, voice tight, "because movement and stress makes my system work faster."

Phone Woman's voice shook.

"Are you a fucking t-rex? That's not a thing."

"It is for me," the predator said.

The gentle-voiced woman swallowed hard.

"What's your name?"

The predator blinked, startled by the question.

"Mara," she said after a beat.

"I'm Lisa," the gentle woman said. "That's Eli," she added, nodding toward him. "And you—"

"Trevor," the man by the buttons said automatically.

Phone Woman hesitated, then muttered, "Nina."

Mara the predator nodded once, as if filing the information away. "Okay," she said. "Okay. Listen. I know this is—" She stopped and pressed her palm harder into her stomach as another slow contraction rolled through her. Her face tightened, then smoothed with effort. "I know this is unimaginable. But we're in a closed box, and I'm trying to keep everyone alive."

"By digesting someone?" Nina snapped.

"He volunteered," Mara hissed. "He chose this. How do I explain it? It's a…"

"Fetish?" Eli supplied. That was the other speculation online—that people were using these predators for sexual gratification. He didn't understand it himself, but somebody had paid to be eaten by her.

Digested by her.

Mara shot him pained finger guns. Nina's mouth opened and closed like a fish.

“A fetish?” she gagged. “To be digested? No, no, you have to be lying. Nobody could want… I mean he’d have to have…”

Mara sighed and unbuttoned the bottom of her shirt. Her smooth skin rippled as she pulled her stomach free from her waistband. There, right above the belly button, was what was unmistakably… a boner. The man inside of her grunted as she sloshed him back into place.

“Oh… my God,” Nina said.

Trevor raised his hands, palms out. “Okay. Okay. This guy gets off on being fucking digested. So control it. Stop.”

Mara looked at him with exhausted honesty. “I can’t stop digestion once it begins,” she said. “I can slow it sometimes. I can manage it. But not forever.”

Eli’s skin crawled as he imagined it. Someone inside her, the elevator stuck, time stretching, and Mara’s body working regardless. He tried not to think about the man—him—as a person. His brain wanted to protect him by making him an abstraction. A concept. A problem.

But Mara’s hand trembled against her stomach, and that made it impossible to pretend it wasn’t real.

Minutes passed.

The half-light made everyone’s faces look pale and waxy. Nina wiped her palms on her pants again and again. Trevor kept pressing the emergency call button like persistence would change the estimate. Lisa stood very still, eyes fixed on Mara with a kind of horrified compassion.

Mara’s breathing stayed slow until it didn’t.

A deeper sound came from her abdomen, a prolonged gurgle that made everyone flinch. Mara’s face went white.

***Glrt. Glrt. Glrt.***

“Sorry,” she whispered.

Nina backed away again, hitting the wall with her shoulder. “Stop saying sorry,” she snapped. “Do something.”

Mara's eyes were glassy. "I am doing something," she said. "I'm holding it. I'm—"

Another internal movement rolled through her, and the curve beneath her coat visibly shifted downward, spreading wider as whatever was inside softened, collapsed, redistributed.

***GLLOooOOOOooOOORRRP!***

Eli's stomach turned.

Trevor's voice broke. "This isn't—this isn't possible."

Lisa's eyes filled with tears. "How long?" she whispered, not to anyone in particular. "How long does it take?"

Mara swallowed hard.

"Usually," she said, "a while. I make it take a while."

Nina's voice rose.

"Make it take longer!"

Mara's mouth twitched—something like pain, something like bitter humor.

"I'm trying," she said. "But being trapped like this makes my body interpret it as danger. Danger makes it speed up."

Eli's pulse hammered. "So… what happens when it's done?"

Mara closed her eyes. "When it's done," she said softly, "I have room."

The words were simple. The implication was not.

Trevor shook his head hard, as if refusing could bend reality. "No. No, no, no. You said you were trying to keep everyone alive."

"I am," Mara insisted. "I am. If we get out before—" She stopped, breath catching. Another gurgle rolled through her, deeper. "Before my system decides for me."

"Decides for you?" Nina asked.

Mara opened her eyes and looked at the elevator doors.

"When I get too full and too stressed," she said, "my body pushes me to feed again. It becomes… compulsive."

Eli's voice was thin. "So you're… hungry."

Mara flinched. “No,” she said quickly. “It’s not hunger. It’s—” She searched for words, then gave up. “It’s a drive. It’s a predator thing. Animal instinct. We are different creatures.”

Trevor slammed his fist lightly against the panel. “They said twenty minutes.”

As if summoned, the speaker crackled.

“Elevator car B17,” the operator’s voice said. “Technicians are on site. Estimated release in approximately fifteen minutes.”

Fifteen.

Lisa let out a sob of relief.

Nina sucked in a ragged breath. “Fifteen minutes,” she repeated. “We can do fifteen.”

Mara’s face didn’t change.

Eli noticed that first: the way Mara didn’t brighten, didn’t loosen, didn’t look relieved. Her eyes stayed fixed inward, distant, her jaw clenched.

“What?” Eli asked, voice small. “What’s wrong?”

Mara swallowed, then spoke carefully. “I don’t know if I can hold it fifteen,” she said.

Nina’s relief evaporated. “What do you mean you don’t know? You have to.”

“I’m trying,” Mara said, voice rough. “But I can feel it… finishing.”

A slow, heavy motion rolled through her belly, and the bulge changed shape again, compressing, settling into a denser mass.

***Glooorp…***

Eli’s hands went cold.

Lisa’s voice was pleading. “Mara. Please. Please just—just keep breathing. Keep doing what you were doing.”

Mara nodded faintly, grateful for the attempt at help. She took a deep breath. In through her nose. Out through her mouth. Again. Again.

For a few minutes, it almost worked.

The elevator creaked. The air warmed. Time crawled. But Mara's breathing stayed controlled, her hand pressing firmly into her stomach as if anchoring the internal motion.

Then the gurgle came again.

Louder.

***GLoooOOOORRRP…***

Mara gasped and doubled slightly. Her coat strained as her stomach pushed outward, then rippled as a contraction moved through.

Nina screamed and that scream seemed to snap something.

Mara's eyes widened. She pressed her head back against the wall and whispered, "No, no, no."

Trevor's voice shook.

"What? What is it?"

Mara's hand slid across her stomach, searching, feeling.

Then she exhaled slowly.

"I have room," she said.

Silence.

"Okay," Nina said, clapping. "Great. Great. That means—what—he's done? That means you're not full anymore? That means you're fine?"

Mara looked up at them, and the expression on her face was the worst part. Pure resignation. Resignation and shame.

"It means," she said quietly, "my body is going to want me to fill it."

Lisa shook her head. "No."

Trevor backed against the panel. "No, no, no—listen, we have fifteen minutes. We can just—just stand here. Don't move. Don't—"

Mara's breathing quickened. Her hand tightened on her stomach.

Nina's voice cracked.

"We're people."

"I know," Mara said, her voice breaking on the last word.

Eli's heart raced as he realized none of them had anywhere to go. The elevator was a box. A sealed space. The doors were inches away and might as well have been a wall in another universe.

"Please don't fight me," Mara whispered.

Trevor's eyes went wild. "What?"

Mara's gaze had landed on him. Maybe because he was closest. Maybe because he'd been the loudest. Maybe because her body had already made the decision and her mind was just trying to keep up.

"Please," she repeated, voice shaking. "If you fight me, I'll panic. If I panic, I won't be able to stop."

Trevor let out a strangled sound. "Stop? You're going to—"

Mara moved.

Trevor tried to shove past her, but there was nowhere to shove. Nina and Lisa were pressed into the wall, Eli trapped beside them. Mara's hand caught Trevor's wrist, and the strength in it made Eli's breath hitch—firm, unarguable.

Trevor screamed, "No! No!"

Mara's face contorted.

"I'm sorry," she said, the words torn out of her.

Then she pulled him toward her.

Eli couldn't look away.

The elevator wasn't large enough to hide what was happening. Trevor's panic was loud, physical, scraping at the walls. Mara's composure cracked and reformed, cracked and reformed, as if she was trying to be gentle while her body insisted on efficiency. Ghoulish gulping echoed through the space. Saliva dribbled down her chin. Her eyes narrowed to pinpricks, singularly focused on stuffing herself.

The act was quick in a way that made it worse.

Trevor's voice cut off abruptly. The elevator's air shifted. Mara's stomach expanded, visibly, her shirt straining as the new weight settled inside her. Her shirt burst in a hail of buttons. Soft, pink skin filled the space in the center of the elevator.

Nina covered her mouth with both hands, eyes huge.



Lisa made a small keening sound and slid down the wall, her knees giving out.

Eli couldn't feel his fingers.

Mara leaned back against the wall, both hands on her stomach now, breathing hard. Her shirt had torn completely loose from her body, as had her bra. Both lay tattered on the floor, hidden in the shadow of her heaving breasts.

"I'm sorry," she said again, hoarse.

Nina sobbed. "Oh my God. Oh my God."

Eli heard himself whisper, "That was… that was fast."

Mara's eyes flicked to him. She didn't look proud. She looked terrified.

"It will be faster now," she said.

"Why?" Nina shrieked.

"Because my system is already active," Mara said. "Because stress accelerates it. Because he went in warm."

Lisa choked on a sob.

Eli felt bile rise in his throat. The words were clinical, almost gentle, but they painted a picture his brain didn't want. 'Went in warm'...

***GLorrBBllRRGRrrRT…***

Minutes passed in a kind of stunned paralysis.

Mara's stomach moved. Subtle contractions that became more obvious as time went on. A low, wet gurgle that echoed in the elevator's small space, then another. The smell grew stronger—warm, sour-sweet, a biological presence that made Eli's eyes water.

Bile. The scent of digested meat.

Nina whispered, "I can't— I can't breathe."

"You can," Lisa said, voice trembling but firm, trying to anchor reality. "Breathe. In. Out. Just keep breathing."

Eli took a shaky breath. The air tasted wrong. Mara let out a belch into her elbow and it tasted acidic. Her stomach wasn't moving anymore.

The speaker crackled again.

"Elevator car B17," the operator said. "We're making progress. Estimated release in approximately ten minutes."

Ten.

Eli felt relief flash, bright and desperate.

Nina made a choked sound that might have been a laugh. "Ten minutes," she whispered. "Ten minutes. Ten minutes. Ten."

Lisa's eyes fixed on Mara. "Mara," she said softly, pleading. "Ten minutes. Can you hold for ten minutes?"

Mara's hands pressed harder into her stomach, as if physically restraining it. She nodded once.

"I'll try," she said.

For a moment, the elevator was nothing but breathing and the relentless passage of time. Eli's muscles cramped from standing tense. Nina's quiet sobs came in waves. Lisa whispered nonsense—prayers, maybe, or just words to fill the silence.

Mara's breathing was the loudest thing.

Then her stomach gurgled again.

Loud enough to drown out Nina's sobbing. Loud enough that the elevator seemed to vibrate with it.

***GLOOooORRRRRP…***

Mara froze.

Her eyes widened.

Nina's head snapped up. "No," she whispered. "No, no, no."

Mara's voice was barely audible. "It's making room."

Eli's relief shattered.

Lisa's voice went thin. "Mara—"

Mara shook her head, panic in the motion. "I'm full," she said quickly, as if stating it could make it true. "I'm so full. I can't— I can't take more."

But her stomach moved again, the bulge changing shape, expanding lower and broader. It flooded outward. It bounced.

Nina began to shake her head, rapid and frantic. "No."

Eli’s voice came out as a whisper. “Is he… already…?”

Mara didn’t answer directly. She swallowed and said, “He’s going.”

Nina made a strangled noise. “We have ten minutes!”

Mara’s eyes flicked to the speaker, then to the doors, then to the people around her. She looked enormous now, filling the elevator with her distended weight, her stomach bulging forward so far that it pressed into the space where Eli’s knees wanted to be.

“I can’t,” she said again. “I can’t eat another bite.”

Lisa’s voice rose, hysterical “Then don’t!”

Mara’s face twisted. “You don’t understand,” she whispered. “I—”

The elevator creaked, metal complaining under the redistributed mass.

Mara’s stomach gurgled again, and this time she exhaled with it, a sound that wasn’t quite a sigh and wasn’t quite a sob.

Her eyes lifted to Nina.

Nina saw it and screamed.

She tried to push past Eli, tried to scramble toward the doors, but there was nowhere to go and no way to open them. She slammed her fists against the metal seam and sobbed, “Help! Help!”

Lisa grabbed Nina’s arm, trying to pull her back, trying to keep her from thrashing.

“Stop,” Lisa begged. “Stop! You’ll—”

Mara flinched at the panic. Her breathing sped up. Her hands clenched on her stomach.

“Please,” Mara said, voice shaking. “Please don’t.”

Nina turned, wild-eyed. “Don’t what? Don’t what?! Panic? Are you fucking crazy?! Help me! HELP ME, YOU FUCKING ASSHOLES!”

Mara’s expression broke.

“I made room,” she whispered.

Nina's scream cut off quickly, swallowed by the small space and by Mara's sudden, awful efficiency. It was faster than Trevor had been, which shouldn't have been possible but was. The elevator filled with movement and muffled sound and the shifting heat of Mara's body as she took Nina into herself.

Eli pressed his back against the wall so hard it hurt.

Lisa's hands flew to her mouth. Her eyes were wide, pupils huge, tears streaming down her cheeks.

When it was over, Mara's stomach swelled further, pressing into the remaining space until Eli and Lisa were pinned in their corners like objects.

Mara leaned against the wall, panting now, both hands on her abdomen as it churned relentlessly.

"It's faster," she whispered, horrified. "It's so much faster."

Lisa slid down the wall again, collapsing to the floor, her knees drawn up. She looked tiny beside Mara's immenseness.

Eli stared at Mara's stomach as it moved, the surface changing, contractions rolling through it like waves. The smell was overwhelming. The heat radiating from Mara was intense. He tried, in his flustered brain, to see the eroticism in it, but he couldn't. He cursed whoever had hired the predator. He cursed them to Hell.

Lisa's voice came out as a whisper. "How much time?"

Eli looked at the panel.

No indicator. No help.

But he could count.

The operator had said ten minutes.

Five had passed.

Mara's stomach gurgled again, deep and final-sounding, and Mara pressed her head back against the wall and whispered, "No. No, no, no."

Lisa looked up in terror. "Mara?"

Mara's eyes were squeezed shut. "I can't," she said again, and she sounded like she meant it. "I can't take more. I'm… I'm enormous. I'm—I'm going to split this elevator in half."

Eli's voice was barely there. "Then… then we're safe."

Mara opened her eyes.

They were glassy. Focused inward. Her mouth trembled.

"I want you to be safe," she said.

Lisa shook her head, tears falling. "We just need a few more minutes. Just a few."

The speaker crackled.

"Elevator car B17," the operator said. "Technicians are close. Estimated release in approximately ten minutes."

Ten minutes again.

Eli's heart dropped.

Lisa's eyes widened. "No. No, you said ten minutes already."

The operator's voice remained calm. "There have been complications. We apologize for the delay. Please remain calm."

The call cut.

Lisa made a sound as her lungs emptied.

Eli felt something cold spread through him. Not fear—fear was hot. This was the hollow certainty of a countdown. He closed his eyes.

"Ten minutes," Mara repeated.

Eli's voice shook. "You said you can't."

"I said I can't," Mara whispered. "And I meant it, then."

Lisa clutched her own knees. "Mara, please."

Mara's hand moved across her stomach. The bulge was immense now, filling the elevator's space, pressing into Eli's thighs even with him pinned against the wall.

Then her stomach gurgled.

A rolling, wet, insistent noise that came from deep inside her, howling, hungry.

***GGLLoooRRRGGllLLRrrRRRRRT!***

Mara froze.

Eli looked up.

Mara's expression changed in a way that was almost subtle. Confusion first. Then realization.

Eli's voice was a whisper. "What?"

Mara swallowed.

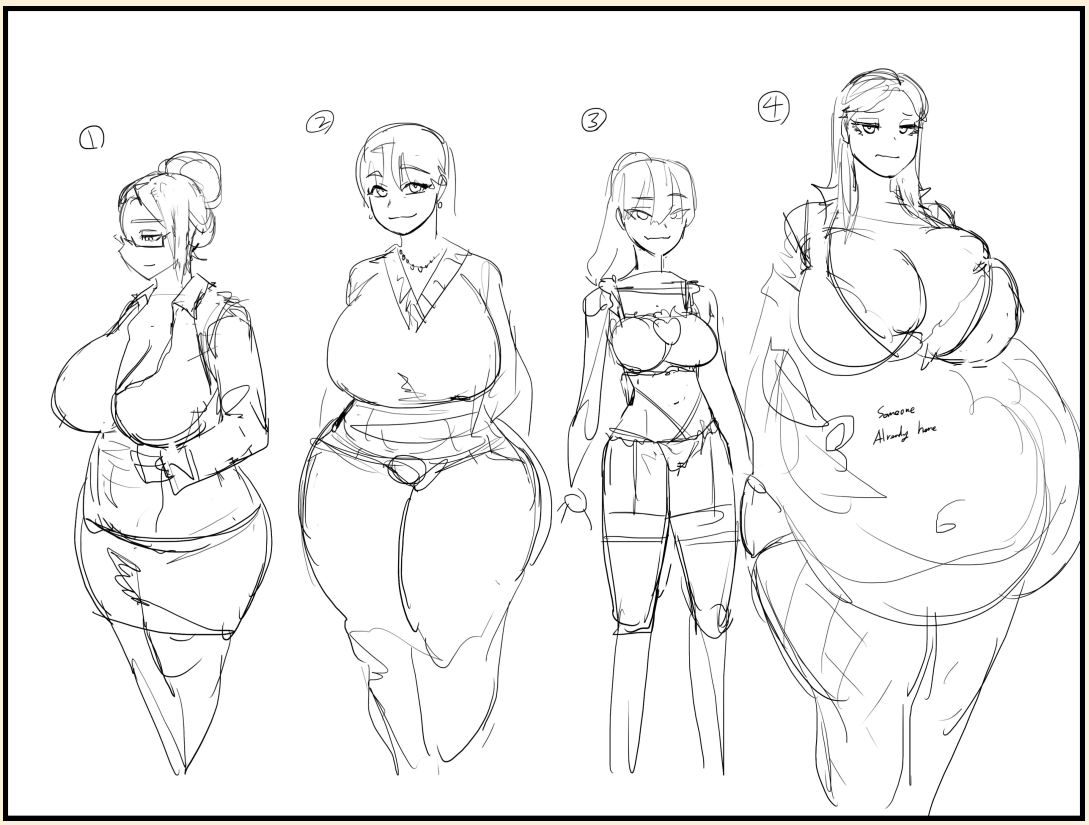
Her mouth curved into a small, terrible smile.

"I'm so sorry," she said. "I made some room."

The elevator creaked.

"Enough for both of you."






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